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Rose of sugar

Saumya, AIS Noida, XII I

I told myself, "Just keep walking." So, I walked. Past the beautiful dresses beneath the shop lights, past the delicious cakes sitting behind glass, past price tags that seemed to grow longer the closer I got. I kept my eyes on the pavement. Looking made me want things and I had come with all my savings.

I had promised Ella a birthday she would remember. A cake, a new dress. Instead, I had counted my money three times outside the bakery and walked away. I was learning that some promises were easier to make than to keep. By the time I reached home, the evening had settled into the windows. Ella was out playing. I had a few hours before she returned. So, I opened the old tin box beneath my desk.

Inside was sugar. Not ordinary sugar, of course. My mother had taught me the trick when I was young: melt a handful of it slowly, until it turns clear and bright. Then breathe your wish into it before it cools. "Sugar remembers," she used to say. I'd always thought she meant sweetness. Now I understood what she meant. I stirred the sugar until it began to shimmer.

The first time Ella saw me making something, she tried to dip her fingers into the molten syrup. I had pulled her hand away, and she had cried for hours. "I only wanted some stars, Mum." Not all of them, just some, she had insisted. I smiled at the memory. That was Ella. When she was little, she would sneak into our neighbour's garden just to stare at the roses through the fence. A rose it was then. As she grew older, she stopped telling me when she wanted dresses or cake. Children learn silence when they see their parents count coins.

Tomorrow was her birthday. Tonight, I wanted her to be a child again. As I began to blow, the warm sugar stretched beneath my fingers. I went down the memory lane: her first steps, her terrible singing, the nights she was ill, the way she still reached for my hand when she was frightened. I poured every memory I had into the sugar. And then I saw it. A stem. Then a leaf. Then petals. One after another, they unfolded. Turning the exact shade of red Ella had loved as a child. If Ella loved roses so, I wanted to give her one that would never cease. The syrup crackled faintly as it tightened into shape.

I poured every memory I had into the sugar. And then I saw it. A stem. Then a leaf. Then petals. One after another, they unfolded.

The final petal trembled, and it opened. The rose seemed to breathe. A drop of clear sugar gathered at its centre, shining like a tear, and a soft fragrance arose from it, fresh earth, summer air, and something I could not name but knew at once as love. I stopped breathing because I thought the magic might vanish if I moved. My hands began to shake. I wanted to laugh, cry, call for Ella, and hide the rose away where nothing could hurt it. Instead, I pressed it gently to my heart. It was warm.

When Ella came home, I gave it to her. "Mum," she whispered, "it smells like home." I laughed, though my eyes had filled with tears. That night, we discovered the rose's strange gift. When we held it, our tiredness vanished. Sometimes it smelled of vanilla cake. Sometimes rain. Once, it smelled like my mother's old kitchen. Ella carried it everywhere.

Perhaps magic was never about buying lavish presents, but about possessing the drive to do everything to make a loved one happy. A rose of sugar meant her happiness would never wilt. My mother used to say, "I do not know about pixie dust, but you can never go wrong with some sugar." And she was absolutely right. GT

F for fiction



Illustration: Divisha Gupta, AIS Noida, XII I

Making A Newspaper Contest
AIS Noida
2026-27

The hue and cry

Poem

Myra Gupta, AIS Noida, XI H

I'm grief, I'm midnight, I'm jeans on a floor
I'm exhausted, Olo, I'm closing the door
I'm tired of crowds, of hustle and din
I'd trade all my skies for a quiet little den

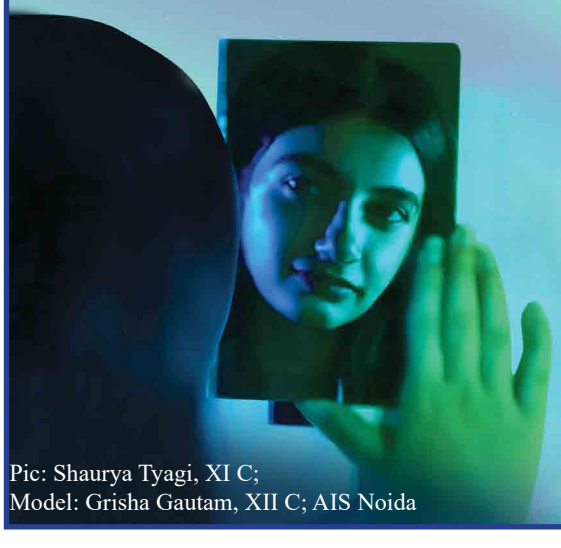
I'd hide in the shadows, cozy and small
No eyes on my colour, no eyes at all
I'd swap all my glory for your shyest hide
To nap in the shadows and vanish outside

Oh please! The dramatics! You think you can quit?
You want to trade lives? You'd crack in a split!
You think vanishing's some kind of treat?
I'm Olo! A frequency skipping a beat

I'm a neon unheard, the glare on your screen
The wavelength of light that has never been seen
I crave your big fame and your sapphire-bright
I'd trade all my secrets for one watt of light

What secrets? You're empty air, darling!
I'm everything at once, you're a glitch in the snarling!
You're sick of the glory, then hand me the crown
I am sick of nobody ever looking down

Oh, look at us! Bleeding on the canvas floor
Two prima donnas who are begging for more
One's chained to the heavens, one's locked in the dark
Both anchored in their truth, a perennial spark.



Pic: Shaurya Tyagi, XI C;
Model: Grisha Gautam, XII C; AIS Noida

READ • PLAY • WIN

Answer • Participate • Win Prizes

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1 Write answers of all the questions below
2 Click Photograph
3 Mail: editor@theglobaltimes.in or
Visit: http://theglobaltimes.in/readplaywin/

Q.1 How many people voted for 'Yes' in the poll result featured on page 1?	Q.2 As mentioned on page 5, when was LEGO's patent filed?
Q.3 How many components of a space-suit are in focus on page 7?	Q.4 What is the name of the gadget depicted in the science ad on page 4?
Q.5 Who made the illustration for the short story on page 8 titled 'Rose of sugar'?	Q.6 Who is the interviewee on page 3?

Winners 124

Result of Read Play & Win: Aanshi Sikka, AIS Gur 46, VII A; Anrav Prakash, AIS Gur-43, IV C; Shubhi Kaushik, AIS Mayur Vihar, VIII D

Page editors: Saumya, XII I & Zayn Negi, VII J, AIS Noida